

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Status

Claims 1, 5, 7-36, 42-71, 75, and 77-106 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 5, 10-21, 26-31, 33-36, 40, 45, 46, 61-66, 68-71, 75, 80-91, 96-101 and 103-105 are withdrawn from consideration as a result of a previous Restriction Requirement and subsequent election by Applicants. Claims 7-9, 22-25, 32, 42-44, 57-60, 67, 77-79, 92-95, 102 and 106 are currently being considered and are rejected. Of the claims under consideration, claims 32, 67, 102 and 106 are independent in form. Claims 32, 67, 102 and 106 are amended herein. No new matter is added by these amendments.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

The rejection of claims 7, 32, 42, 57, 67, 77, 102 and 106 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) allegedly as being unpatentable over the combination of Edgar, U.S. Patent No. 5,266,805 (“Edgar”), Florent, U.S. Patent No. 5,832,111 (“Florent”), and Maeda et al., U.S. Publication No. 20030128889 (“Maeda”), and of claims 8-9, 22-25, 43-44, 57-60, 78-79 and 92-95 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) allegedly as being unpatentable over the combination of Edgar and Florent as applied to claims 7, 42 and 77, and further in view of Nichani et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,949,905 (“Nichani”) have been maintained. Applicants respectfully disagree with the characterization of the claims and prior art in the stated rejection and respectfully traverse this rejection.

Amended independent claim 32 is directed to a signal processing method for processing a visible light image signal and infrared image signal obtained by illuminating a

transparent document with light beams respectively coming from a visible light source for mainly emitting visible light and an infrared light source for mainly emitting infrared light, and photoelectrically converting optical images of the transparent document into an image signal of a plurality of pixels, comprising: a segmentation step of segmenting the infrared image signal of the plurality of pixels into a plurality of blocks, wherein each block includes an infrared image signal of two or more pixels; a generation step of generating a histogram for each of the plurality of blocks on the basis of the infrared image signal of each block; a calculation step of calculating a threshold value for each of the plurality of blocks on the basis of the histogram generated in the generation step; an extraction step of comparing the threshold value calculated in the calculation step with the infrared image signal, and extracting infrared image signal components not more than the threshold value, for each of the plurality of blocks; and an interpolation step of executing an interpolation process of the visible light image signal on the basis of the infrared image signal components extracted in the extraction step.

None of the prior art of record, alone or in combination, discloses, teaches, or suggests the method recited by independent claim 32. Amended independent claims 67, 102, and 106 are believed to define patentable subject matter for similar reasons.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention as claimed is neither taught nor suggested by, and therefore neither anticipated by nor rendered obvious in view of, Edgar, Florent, Maeda, Nichani, or other prior art of record, taken individually or in combination. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection applied to claims 1, 5, 7-36, 42-71, 75, and 77-106 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Dependent Claims

Applicants have not independently addressed the rejections of the dependent claims. Applicants submit that, in view of the amendments to the claims presented herein and, for at least similar reasons as to why the independent claims from which the dependent claims depend are believed allowable as discussed supra, the dependent claims are also allowable. Applicants however, reserve the right to address any individual rejections of the dependent claims should such be necessary or appropriate.

CONCLUSION

For the above-stated reasons, this application is respectfully asserted to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable examination on the merits is requested. In the event that a telephone conference would facilitate the examination of this application in any way, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number provided.

AUTHORIZATION

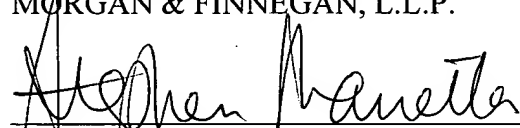
The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for consideration of this Request to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-4724.

In the event that an extension of time is required, or which may be required in addition to that requested in a petition for an extension of time, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-4724.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: May 11, 2006

By: _____


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